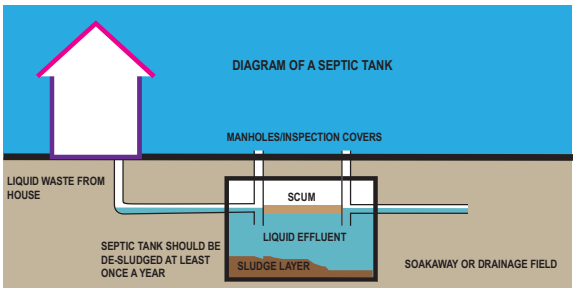
Septic Tanks



Septic Tanks are designed to collect sewage and wastewater from households not connected to the mains sewer.

The tank comprises of two chambers, as wastewater and sewage enters the tank, solids settle at the bottom and begin to decompose in the lower chamber. Meanwhile, liquors flow through to a second chamber to allow any smaller suspended solids to settle before exiting the tank through the soak away system and into the environment, subject to consent to discharge issued by the Environment Agency. Septic Tanks do not require full emptying, however, they need to be 'de-sludged'. This process involves removing the solids or sludge from the system but leaving enough water for the system to continue to operate efficiently.

Septic Tank Do's & Don'ts

Do's

- Have your septic tank system professionally installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and following Environment Agency guidelines and regulations.
- Know where your septic tank and drainage field are located.
- Have your system inspected and serviced regularly.
- De-sludge the tank in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Act immediately if you find a blockage or at any sign of a problem.
- If necessary, seek professional help
- Ensure you retain all paperwork relating to all maintenance work.
- Ensure all manhole covers are accessible.
- Ensure that any air vents are not clear.
- Keep the drainage field protected.
- Divert sources of water, such as rainwater, away from septic tank systems.
- Use toilet fresheners, mild detergents, fabric conditioners and washing powders and liquids in moderation to avoid upsetting the natural balance of the septic tank. All active ingredients in soap and detergents should be biodegradable and should be safe for septic tanks in normal use.
- Use bleaches and disinfectants sparingly as they can kill the friendly bacteria which make the septic tank work.

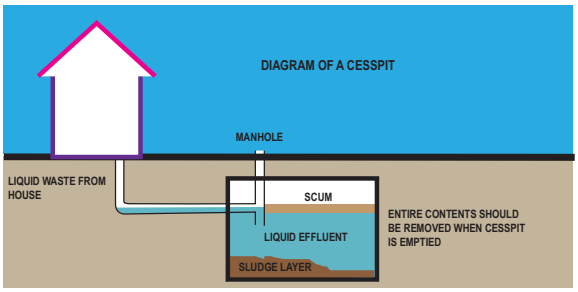
Don'ts

- Do not pour fats, oils or heavy grease down the drain.
- Do not pour paints, solvents and motor oils down the drain.
- Never dispose of garden chemicals and pesticides into the septic tank.
- Do not empty chemical toilets into drains or septic tanks.
- Do not use the toilet or kitchen sink as a rubbish bin. Nappies, sanitary items, plastic or similar items should not be disposed of into the system - 'bag it and bin it' instead.
- Do not dig or drive over the drainage field, (soakaway), or cover it with a hard surface.
- Do not block air vents.
- Do not allow effluent to collect on the surface of the ground.
- Never enter a septic tank it is a dangerous and potentially deep chamber.

Please be aware that prolonged bad weather or heavy rain can cause the ground around the tank and soak away to become saturated. This can cause the tank to fill up faster than usual as the liquid cannot drain through the soak away.

Cesspits

A cesspit is a sealed, watertight underground tank that captures wastewater and sewage and simply acts as a temporary holding chamber. Depending on the size of the tank, the nature of the building and the number of occupants, the cesspit will need to need to be emptied regularly, either at monthly, quarterly or annual intervals as required. The cesspit will usually be discreetly buried underground with a single manhole cover for access by a waste collection team



Cesspit Do's & Don'ts

Because it is a sealed system there is little in the way of household liquid that cannot be discharged into a cesspit. However:

Do's

- Empty the tank regularly; at least once a year.
- Do use biologically friendly products.
- Do have the system emptied regularly.

Don'ts

- Empty the tank regularly; at least once a year.
- Do use biologically friendly products.
- Do have the system emptied regularly.

Please be aware that prolonged bad weather or heavy rain can cause the ground around the pit and manhole cover to become saturated. This can cause the tank to fill up faster than usual.

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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